wards Women, the Girl Child and other vulnerable groups has already assumed serious proportions. These problems lower the quality of human development. The problem will be effectively addressed.

(vii) The special problems of the juvenile delinquents and the children and difficult circumstances will be addressed by ensuring effective implementation of Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 and other curative and rehabilitative measures to reform the social deviants.

(viii) To meet these social welfare needs, the State welfare administration will be re-oriented with professionally trained personnel so as to ensure formulation of need based policies and programmes with effective implementation tn response to the local needs. At the field level, effective convergence of available services through proper linkages and inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms will be ensured. Efforts will also be made to monitor the implementation of various social welfare programmes, particularly those of the social defence programmes of the State Sector. Efforts will be made to assess the qualitative impact of these programmes.

(ix) Efforts will be made to involve the voluntary and corporate institutions in implementing the various schemes aimed at the welfare and development of these groups.

Identification of backward areas

2008. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up some programmes to identify backward areas of the country on priority basis;

(b) whether Govemment have also taken up programmes to identify areas having more poverty in some blocks; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, with the projects to be undertaken to remove backwardness and poverty, in identified areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) to (c) No Sir, Planning and development of an area and allocation of funds for that purpoose is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Govemment. Planning Commission have not fixed any criteria for declaration of an area as backward. However, Ministry of Rural Development & Employment have set up a committee to evolve criteria for identification of 100 most backward and poorest districts to identify such districts in various States, and to suggest appropriate definition of the term "infrastructure development". The committee was set up on 26th February, 1977 and is to submit its report with in two months.

Gap between rich and poor due to economic reforms

2009. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with the introduction of economic reforms during the last five years, the gap between the rich and the, poor has widened, particularly, in populous cities like Calcutta;

(b) whether it is also a fact that 16 per cent of the country's population lives on less than three rupees a day, i.e. far below the official poverty line;

(c) if not, the per capita, per day, income of people living below the poverty line; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to improve the situation and bring the poor above the poverty line?